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March 23, 1965

Dear Sidney:

We want you to know how much we appreciate what you have done and are trying to do for us. Although we are confident you know this, we nonetheless are articulating it. We do appreciate it, deeply. We will immediately do what you suggest and will try our best to accomplish it.

Both of us understand you are doing this because of friendship and because that is the kind of guy you are. Nonetheless, we also feel that you should have more than the appreciation of friends. At the moment, all we can share is trouble and debts. But if anything comes of this book, there should be more worthwhile things to share.

If you were only free, at least long enough to go over the manuscript, I believe you would render both Ivan and us a most valuable service. Could your affairs permit it if it could eventually provide an income for the time? Although from what you said it seems impossible, we would be delighted if you could do the revision, alone or with us. There should be no doubt in your mind that there would be no problem from us, for as you know we have immeasurable confidence in your judgment. Perhaps Ivan would feel the same way. But if you could do nothing else than tell me how to revise it in the manner you think Ivan wants, that would be a great help for, frankly, I just don't know. When I asked questions designed to elicit this knowledge, I got no answers.

We didn't talk much about it last night, but I have thought much about what Janie Glaesser could have meant by a chronological approach further than I took it. I do have some ideas that I will come to in a minute. For your understanding, I am including a copy of the table of contents and a brief explanation I wrote for a different purpose, thinking they might help. This table of contents is virtually identical with the one I submitted with the first chapters.

As you can see, the first two parts are chronological beginning with the night before the assassination and going through the murder of Oswald. The third part deals with what followed these events. I believe this is both logical and chronological, but I do not insist I am right. It is only with the first chapter in this part that I got any glimmer of Janie's thinking. As I understood it, she thought the quotations from the witnesses, addressed at the Report and not the crimes, should be included in the earlier narrative. I think this is wrong, but I am willing to do it as I then indicated. Prior to this

point in our going through the manuscript, I do not believe there was a single change I did not agree to, without argument. My reason for having a separate treatment of this kind of the witnesses was because Ivan and I agreed from the very beginning that this would be a book on the Report, not the assassination. I still believe this is the only kind of a book that can succeed or will be accepted.

The next chapter in the third part deals with the Oswalds' government relations. Like the part dealing with the police, it seems to me essential to an understanding of what happened and of the Report. In a strictly chronological sense, it belongs earlier in the book, where I also agreed it could go. However, I think now as I did then that to put it earlier would interrupt the flow of the narrative and give it the wrong emphasis. Nonetheless, if Ivan wants it earlier, I will comply. It is in the draft under the part related most directly to the Commission because ie it the Report's story and is considered in the Report as something separate from the crimes. It has nothing to do with the police, either. The Report saw fit to misrepresent the Oswalds' government relations.

"The False Oswald" certainly was created before the assassination. If Ivan wants it earlier, there are a number of places it could perhaps be fitted into. Even though I think it would weaken the book and interrupt its flow to do so, again I am willing.

Of the two remaining chapters, "The Number of Shots" also could go earlier, I suggested to Janie as part of or following chapter 6. In outlining the book, I considered this and decided against it. This chapter is restricted entirely to the Commission's reconstruction of the number of shots, which is, of course, pivotal in the Report. It shows not only that the Commission was not certain in its basic conclusion but, worse, it distorted, misrepresented and suppressed the essential evidence. It is thoroughly documented and I believe in itself destroys the Report. Because it deals with the Report rather than the events and because I feared such a destruction of the Report so early in this book might make anything following anticlimactic, I saved it for the end. While I still believe it belongs there, I do not insist and will move it.

There remains only "The Doctors and the Autopsy". Chronologically, it would seem that the autopsy is the end. The manner in which the Commission handled the doctors makes sense, I believe, only in conjunction with the autopsy. While I believe it would be confusing and add nothing of value in separating the doctors and putting them earlier, if Ivan wants it, I will do it.

From the above, if I understand what Janie thinks should be done, I hope it can be seen that there should be no major problem in accomplishing it. As I made clear from the first, I pretend no expert knowledge about books or book publishing and some, perhaps all, of my reasons for the arrangement of the rough draft may from that point of view be invalid. My reasons were to arrange what seemed to me to be a more reasonable and comprehensible book, on the Report rather than the assassination. Again, I believe this follows the manner of the Report, which I was supposed to follow.

As you know, I have been following as closely as I could hwat has happened to what has appeared that was critical of the Report or the Commission. Not a single thing, no matter how true, has received much acceptance. I believe this is because each addressed itself to aspects of the crimes or argued with the Commission. It has come to the point that protagonists of the Commission no longer feel called upon to answer such criticism. In drafting what I have written, both by organization and content, I had sought to avoid these pitfalls. I believe I have, at least to the degree that it can be done.

Both Ivan and I want the same things: a successful, acceptable book. I well understand that help along this line benefits me in many ways, and I am all for it. But I don't think Ivan wants to lay an egg any more than I do. I believe our interests coincide. Perhaps I am wrong, but I think this book will have be acceptable to more than the literary critics. The press generally will have to be satisfied. This was always present in my thinking of the contents and arrangement.

Also in my mind at the moment is what Ivan and John Ledes might have been told that is not true. For example, just before I left the office, John said I had accused the witness Markham of perjury. At that time I told him I had not. I have since checked my draft and find that I did not. This is one point only, but I wonder whether it represents an additional problem. Similarly, I do not believe that Dick Brennan, Ivan's friend who assisted Janie, ever read my complete draft. As we worked, it seemed clear that he was reading it for the first time as he sought to edit.

As I said, as soon as we get the Brown manuscript, we will do what you suggest. I do not have any reservations about this. We will get into it immediately and do our best with it. But I do not think this is the only answer to the Brown problem and may, in fact, be the worst one from Ivan's point of view. In terms of time alone, a crucial factor with this book, it means long delay, for after we finish and type it, he will go over it; undoubtedly, other things will flow from that. I think speed is a great economic factor. Both John and Ivan told me they would take care of Brown financially. At one point I also suggested I might help out on this. I am not trying to tell you what I think Ivan's business is, but I do think serious thought should be given to the importance oand value of getting the book out in the fastest possible time. Would not that, in itself, have considerable economic value?

On the subject of a writer or rewriter, an additional thing has come to mind. The first time I saw Ivan, when I suggested help from one with a previous experience in investigations would be helpful, he thought of a man who had just written a review of his Patton book. Perhaps he was also the editor of the literary publication in which it appeared. I don't recall its name, but it was similar in appearance to the New York Times Book Section and had a similar name. As you know, and as I have made clear to Ivan from the very beginning, I will raise no problems of style. My interest is content. Could this man, of whom Ivan had a high opinion, be the writer?

If I understood the non-literary defects in my rough draft, as Ivan view them, I believe I could do what revision is required and

have copy ready for the writer or rewriter in about 15 working days. This, it would seem to me, is the most expeditious and possibly least costly approach. I hope Ivan might think about it. Once I have the facts assembled as he wants, I hope the labor of rewriting will not be too great.

It does no good to look back with regrets, but during the past three weeks, because I have had to be ready to leave at a moment's notice, I have been unable to do certain necessary things. Yesterday I had to begin. Now I have scheduled appointments which will take up parts of three days between now and April 5; other than these, however, we have no vital commitments and will avoid all new ones, concentrating on this job only until it is finished. I hope we will be able to work on it as intensively as we did in preparing the draft.

My purpose in this long but hasty letter is not to burden you further but to help perhaps in a solution in which you can be invaluable. I hope you will understand that I am not arguing against what you suggested and will start on that as soon as we receive the Brown manuscript. We have been to Frederick and laid in a supply of paper, carbons and ribbons; we have checked on the typist who was earlier available and find the prospects are she will not be, at least for any considerable amount of typing; we have also learned a public stenographer in Frederick types for $3.00 an hour and also has part-time help available, women who type in their own homes. So you see we have already begun.

A carbon of this letter is enclosed in case you want to give it to Ivan.

I close as I began, Sid, with what we really feel, deep appreciation for your efforts on our behalf. I can only wish that your own affairs would permit you to be more actively associated with this - for remuneration. We both believe this would be much to our interest. I also believe that this book can be a major contribution to our society and one with which you might like to be associated.

Again, our deepest thanks and regards to all.

Sincerely,

Harold